

About the Artist: Star Gossage

Star Gossage is one of New Zealand's foremost living painters and has Ngati Wai, Ngati Ruanui, French, English, and Portuguese ancestry. She lives in Pakiri, a coastal settlement north of Auckland, and makes paintings that the former Curator Māori from Auckland Art Gallery, Ngahiraka Mason, describes as gentle and powerfully evocative of spiritual connections and tribal narratives. They "affirm her whakapapa, relationships to land, sky and ocean" and "experiences shared by her people and the mystical worlds they have inhabited." Works such as *Rahui Kiri Rd*, for example, acknowledge her chiefly Ngati Wai lineage as great-great-granddaughter of Rahui Kiri, daughter of Ngati Wai chief Te Kiri.



PHOTO BY MOANA NEPIA

The metaphorical and melancholy nature of such work echoes histories of confiscated lands and displaced communities; creative responses to ideas from writers such as Garcia Lorca; European, Australian, and New Zealand painters; and a personal, very sensual engagement with paint—its physicality, vibrancy, and texture. Star is a self-taught painter with backgrounds in film, theater, and creative writing. During her visit to Honolulu in early 2016, I talked with her about her work. Sensing herself as part of a creative continuum between the past, present, and future, she said she "feels" her ancestors with her as she works. She collects snapshots and images in her mind of people, places, experiences, and memories and recombines them in her painting.

Star described how some paintings keep "moving . . . morphing into each other," others are finished quickly, and some just "do their own thing." At times when she's so tired her eyes "go numb," she still keeps painting. Sometimes she doesn't "see" what she's done or appreciate her works fully until long after they're finished.

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The art featured in this issue can be viewed in full color in the online versions.



Whai, by Star Gossage, 2011.

Oil on board, 835 mm x 600 mm. Photo by Kallan MacLeod. Private collection. Reproduced courtesy of the artist and Tim Melville Gallery, Auckland.

Whai (Māori string games) entail learning through observation, rehearsal, coordination, and following others. Translated as “follow,” whai may also be termed Te Whai Waewae a Maui, after Maui, whom some iwi (tribal nations) believe was the originator of string games. Children who were quick to learn complex whai were sometimes selected for whare wānanga, the highest schools of learning, where instruction deepened their understanding of relevant cosmologies and genealogies.

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Girl of Evening Blue, by Star Gossage, 2014.

Oil on board, 295 mm x 245 mm. Photo by Kallan MacLeod. Private collection. Reproduced courtesy of the artist and Tim Melville Gallery, Auckland.

Me te mea ko Kōpū ka rere i te pae
(Her beauty) like Venus rising above the horizon

WHAKATAUKI (MĀORI PROVERB)



Far Away Eyes, by Star Gossage, 2012.

Oil on board, 445 mm x 345 mm.

Photograph by Kallan MacLeod. Private collection. Reproduced
courtesy of the artist and Tim Melville Gallery, Auckland.

*Kowhai, entrancing blaze of spring, from naked branches . . .
bountiful harvest, yellow garland of hope.*

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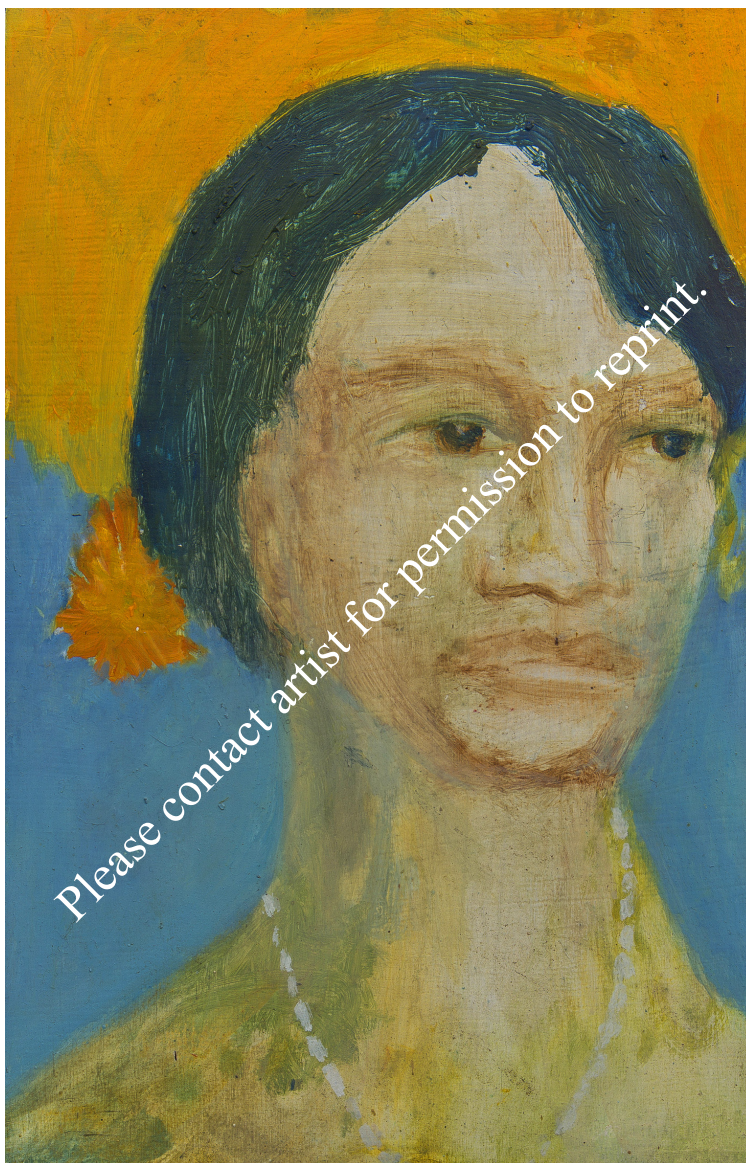


Ahi IV, by Star Gossage, 2006.

Oil on paper, 580mm x 410mm. Photograph by Kallan MacLeod.
Private collection. Reproduced courtesy of the artist and
Tim Melville Gallery, Auckland.

*She who watches over ahi kā . . . fire, occupation, enduring
presence . . . beneath windswept kanuka, sentinel trees,
measuring space, marking time . . .*

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Kane Aloha—young man filled with promise,
by Star Gossage, 2016.

Oil on board, 310 mm x 200 mm. Private collection.
Photograph by Kallan MacLeod. Private collection.
Reproduced courtesy of the artist and Tim Melville
Gallery, Auckland.

You are the living face of those gone before . . .

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Piki te Ora, by Star Gossage, 2014.

Oil on board, 850 mm × 750 mm. Photograph by Kallan MacLeod.
Private collection. Reproduced courtesy of the artist and
Tim Melville Gallery, Auckland.

A gesture of hands, affirming health, success in life . . .

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Rahui Kiri Rd, by Star Gossage, 2013.

Oil on board, 800 mm x 800 mm. Photograph by Kallan MacLeod.

Private collection. Reproduced courtesy of the artist and
Tim Melville Gallery, Auckland.

*Ancestral pathway for Rahui and her father Te Kiri,
Ngati Wai chief . . .*

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Tolomona, by Star Gossage, 2016.

Oil on board, 310 mm x 310 mm. Photograph by Kallan MacLeod. Private collection. Reproduced courtesy of the artist and Tim Melville Gallery, Auckland.

Gauguin gaze . . . no whea koe? Where are you from?

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Untitled (Man & Woman in Landscape), by Star Gossage, 2005.
Oil on paper, 310 mm × 390 mm. Photograph by Kallan MacLeod.
Private collection. Reproduced courtesy of the artist and
Tim Melville Gallery, Auckland.

*Lovers embrace earth tones upon textured ground . . . a thicket
of trees*

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